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ABSTRACT

The process of becoming a world citizen requires, as a first step, personal alienation from the cultural values and social arrangements of nation-states that stand in the way of such an effort. Three interrelated propositions underlie this thesis. First, prevailing cultural values and social arrangements severely limit opportunities for people to reach common agreement about the nature of and solution to significant problems. Second, to reach this common agreement, people must separate themselves from primary allegiance to nation-state interests and operate from a context of world citizenship. Third, learning how to operate from a context of world citizenship requires a participatory planning process which anticipates the future. Alienation occurs as a result of a discrepancy between basic human needs and socially structured opportunities to meet those needs. In Western society, social behavior based on competition, individualism, quantity, and technology perpetuates a system in which access to power and influence is unequal and where control of resources is exerted by upper layers in the hierarchy. These events contribute to alienation of people from their basic needs as human beings. The position of alienation can be used creatively; it distances the individual and allows for analysis of the alienating condition and establishment of a better connection with basic needs. However, it is necessary for the person to move beyond alienation and become involved in a different kind of social-cultural context. A global perspective requires conscious intentionality (purposeful behavior), freedom of choice, and collective effort. Creative work of people operating out of this context enables them to make their world different from what exists. (Author/KC)

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THE CREATIVE USE OF ALIENATION

by

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SP 012 802

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INTRODUCTION

My thesis is that the creation of common values and goals among people throughout the world requires as a first step personal alienation from the dominant cultural values and social arrangements of nation-states that stand in the way of such effort.

I will develop my thesis using three interrelated propositions. First, prevailing cultural values and social arrangements for carrying out these values can severely limit opportunities for people throughout the world to reach common agreement about the nature of significant problems and desired strategies for resolving them. Second, to reach such common agreement about basic problems and solutions people through the world must be able and willing to separate themselves from primary allegiance to nation-state interests and to operate from a perspective and context of world citizenship. Third, learning how to operate from a perspective and context of world citizenship requires use of a planning process of anticipation of the future and participation in global concerns.

The three propositions will be examined in consideration of the meaning of alienation, the basis for alienation, the use of alienation, and what is necessary beyond alienation. First to consider the meaning of alienation.

THE MEANING OF ALIENATION

Personal alienation generally means estrangement, noninvolvement, and lack of identification with something or with others.[1] I am focusing on personal alienation from oppressive conditions within and between nation-states that interfere with meeting common needs of all people in the world for survival and self-realization. Such alienation is partial rather than complete, as would be the case with complete estrangement from all of humanity

or from one's capacity for awareness and understanding. Examples in the United States of dominant values and social arrangements representing oppressive conditions for many people are individualism-survival of the fittest, competition, materialism and quantity, justice based on retribution and hierarchy of classes, positions, and roles. For many alienated individuals these values and social arrangements are viewed as having little meaning due to isolation from them.

Alienation itself is neither positive or negative. I assume that alienation, in the sense of my definition, is a condition that many people have in the world, and that this condition can and should be used for positive rather than destructive purposes. Next, the basis for such alienation will be examined.

THE BASIS FOR ALIENATION

Personal alienation is largely due to a significant discrepancy between a valued set of conditions and socially structured opportunities for achievement of those conditions. As set forth next, the valued set of conditions are the satisfaction of basic human needs. Following the discussion of needs is an examination of how basic need satisfaction can be blocked by creation of artificial needs and by particular social-cultural arrangements within and between nation-states to establish and support artificial needs.

Basic Human Needs

All people through the world have needs for self-preservation, development, and change in order to realize themselves as human beings and to develop their human potentialities.[2] Human need is a conscious desire, aspiration, and intention directed toward satisfaction, and as such motivates behavior.

Needs for biological self-preservation to satisfy the physical conditions of life such as nourishment, warm clothing, health care, transportation, sex, and shelter cannot be separated and isolated from the development and change needs of cultural activity, knowledge, love and friendship, freedom, justice, community, beauty, and creative work.[3] All these needs are basic human needs for the survival and maintenance of a human way of life. The particular ingredients of these needs and their expression varies among people throughout the world but all people are assumed to have them.

Inability to satisfy human needs for survival and maintenance of a human way of life can have revolutionary consequences. People who are frustrated by denial of opportunities to meet their needs can move beyond frustrations and other reactive positions of protest and rebellion to proactive positions of transformation, the creation of alternative social-cultural arrangements to satisfy their needs.

However such transformational possibilities require a clear perception and understanding of such basic human needs as mentioned previously.

Artificial Needs

A clear vision and understanding of needs common to all people is blurred and often distorted in many parts of the world by attempts to create artificial needs for economic profit, dominance and control over others, and for specific nation-state interests. Examples of artificial needs can be seen in most capitalist societies of the world where the values of technology, quantity, power over others, possessions, and personal profit are perpetuated as needs of all people and desired as ends in themselves. For example, while a car as technology could be viewed as one possible means of adequate transportation in a society, the attempt is often made by those who profit by producing cars to convince people that the possession of a car and the

frequent replacement of it is a need in itself.[4] Alternatives to the car for adequate transportation are not deemed worthy of attention.

The perpetuation of artificial and false needs is heightened by the fixation within many nation-states to a certain apparatus or arrangement of production and consumption.[5] The technological and organizational apparatus of production and consumption of goods and services in a capitalist economy clearly means (1) placing primary value on the quantity rather than the quality of goods and services and (2) a disregard of the impact of goods and services on our lives as to meeting basic human needs. For example, money as the primary medium of exchange and the quantity of it, as well as the commodities that money will buy, are all reified as profit and as desired ends in themselves. People are pressured to sell their labor to obtain money to buy goods and services they are expected to need. In this process people begin to perceive themselves and to value themselves as a "thing" or inhuman mechanism that is an integral part of the technological and organizational apparatus.[6] As people become part of the machinery of production and consumption they begin to see themselves as "means" or "tools" for production and consumption.

The production and consumption mentality that prevails in some dominant nation-states on our planet only leads to heightened apprehension that these nation-states do not have available what is needed, despite having a relative abundance as compared to many other people in the world. Acquisition of more and more becomes a self-seeking and lifelong struggle where people individually within nation-states and collectively among nation-states view one another as competitors for their share of a materialistic dream. Such self-seeking and competitive effort to produce and consume more and more, coupled with the constant preoccupation that one doesn't have enough,

contributes to a pervasive value of the inequality of access to meeting needs as a normal condition of life. An acceptance of the values of individualistic and nation-state self-interest, with emphasis on competition for material rewards, implies the acceptance of vastly different positions of people in the technological and organizational apparatus of production and consumption, where only a perpetuation of unequal rights and opportunities can take place. Social behavior individually and collectively based on values of competition, individualism, quantity and technology as an end in itself, perpetuates a hierarchical system of groups, classes, and nation-states where access to power and influence is unequal and where control of wealth and resources is exerted by upper layers in the hierarchy over others.

Events as noted here can only contribute to alienation of people from one another and to alienation from their basic needs as human beings. As will be discussed next such alienation that takes place when attempts are made to substitute pseudo-needs in place of real human needs cannot succeed in the long run with human beings.

THE USE OF ALIENATION

Needs for self-preservation and realization as human beings exist as an inner necessity despite attempts to distort and eliminate such needs. People who remain in touch with their human nature behave in ways to disengage themselves from those conditions that enslave and debase their humanity.[7] To forever remain in a way of life based on alienation and false needs is in reality a way of death. Disengagement from such a way of death is to become separated from it. A necessary condition for disengagement is perception and understanding of the condition of alienation.

First, perception and understanding should be directed to one's alienation from a possible, necessary, and desirable human way of life based on common

human needs for preservation and realization. Perception and understanding of such possibilities, necessities, and desirability begins to take place out of a growing tension and recognizable discrepancy between what is taking place from what is viewed as a satisfying way of human life. Such a developing tension and perceived discrepancy between "what is" in relation to "what can and should be" contributes to a necessary separation from what prevails in order to better understand what is taking place and to consider alternatives.

Second, perception and understanding then should be directed to the basis for one's connection to existing alienated and artificial needs. Focus on the alienating circumstances of everyday life coupled with a growing recognition of one's separation from a human way of life can contribute to a significant shift from allegiance to dominant cultural values and social mechanisms for supporting these values to a gradual separation from them. At the same time a distancing from what prevails is taking place, a reawakening of human potentialities emerges as people get in better touch with their real human needs. In this dual and reciprocal process, personal alienation from common human needs is reduced as alienation from a way of life based on false and artificial needs increases.[8] Heightened self-awareness of human needs, coupled with alienation from social-cultural circumstances antithetical to such needs, sets into motion a struggle to free oneself from structures and functions that stand in the way of recognizing and understanding basic human needs.

While necessary, freeing oneself from oppressive structures and functions is not sufficient to create a way of life compatible with meeting human needs. As previously noted, the condition of alienation; estrangement and isolation, primarily serves as a vehicle for separation and for breaking the bonds that chain people to a particular way of life. The condition of

alienation provides the opportunity for a better connection to human needs. Moving away from the way of life that one has known, painful thoug. it may be, into the no-man's land of alienation is only a necessary first step toward change.[9]

Beyond separation from oppressive structures, functions and values, and a reidentification with basic human needs, the condition of alienation provides the opportunity for people to more clearly perceive significant problems of a society and of the relationships between societies. As previously indicated, initial examination of one's personal relationship with social-cultural circumstances may have contributed to disengagement from these circumstances. Once disengagement has been made further more systematic, understanding can take place from the vantage point of being an "outsider" and in a marginal position to the prevailing way of life. The position of an outsider and marginality can be used to advantage as legitimation of oneself as a human being and struggles to meet one's human needs are no longer sought within a system that is now perceived to be unsatisfactory.

To summarize, the position of alienation can be used to examine the alienating condition and to establish a better connection with basic human needs. However, as will be discussed next, alienated individuals must move beyond alienation in order to create ways to satisfy basic human needs.

BEYOND ALIENATION

The alienated condition usually has contextual references to oneself, family, community, organization, nation-state, or world. The focus here is on personal alienation within the context of the dominant way of life of nation-states and transactions between nation-states that is not conducive to the basic needs of all people on the earth. Disengagement through alienation from contexts not conducive to meeting common human needs provides the

opportunity for people to create a different kind of social-cultural context supportive of meeting human needs. The creation of a nonalienating way of life for all people on this earth requires the use of a planning process by people who have achieved the necessary independence through such disengagement as indicated previously. Such a planning process has as a minimum three basic and interrelated requirements: a global perspective, anticipation of the future, and participatory involvement.[10]

A Global Perspective

The kind of social-cultural context necessary to meet basic human needs of all people clearly requires a world view from the perspective of world citizenship. World citizenship implies individual duties, responsibilities, and obligations as a member of the world community, rather than primary allegiance to nation-states, organizations, community, family, or oneself.

Clearly, world citizenship does not mean denial or avoidance of an intimate face-to-face social organization, community, or family. Such personal and in-depth relationships between people who know one another well enable people to learn the ways of citizenship. Smaller social-cultural systems such as community and larger systems such as the world community are interdependent upon one another for the enhancement of human potentialities. The main question, however, in a world of local and nation-state conflicts that threaten the survival of all people, is one of primary allegiance and emphasis. "It would be vain to attempt a fundamental reconstruction of human life by operating only at the local level--the whole international order must be taken into account--for without peace, the development of every community is in question."[11]

The duties, responsibilities, and obligations of world citizenship requires the recognition of the interdependence of all people throughout the

world in meeting human needs. For example, concern with the deterioration of the physical environment has made more people in the world aware that global interdependence is more than trade agreements and mutual defense treaties between nation-states. Within a context of global ecological risk, a retreat to the "comfort" of isolationism would threaten planetary survival.

A global perspective based on world citizenship requires conscious intentionality, freedom of choice, and collective effort.[12] Conscious intentionality means that behavior is purposeful and carried out with awareness of the implications of that behavior for meeting common human needs. Behavior that is consciously intentional is rational in nature as it is guided by a conception of purpose where certain means are used to achieve certain anticipated ends. The rationality of conscious intentionality is based on a logical relationship between awareness from a global perspective for identifying needs, and the purposes to which such awareness is directed in meeting needs.

Freedom of choice from the perspective of world citizenship means freedom in making choices among available options for behavior to meet basic human needs. The availability and awareness of alternative options for meeting needs are open for all people, and all people have the right of self-determination without regimentation, coercion, and repression.

Collective effort from a global perspective means that people working together in a mutual and cooperative manner increases choices and options for one another in meeting needs. As a result, each individual has a better chance of realizing his or her potentiality.

Conscious intentionality, freedom of choice, and collective effort are interrelated components of world citizenship. Collective effort requires the action of purposive self-determining individuals who operate with one another on the basis of equality and caring about one another. The conscious

intentionality of acts of individuals in collective effort are coordinated by common objectives and desired outcomes. Common objectives and desired outcomes in meeting needs are determined out of social interaction through open communication, support, and provision of opportunities for collective endeavors.

Achieving the perspective and requirements of world citizenship requires making creative use of personal alienation to transcend the dominant value assumptions about the nature of a possible reality inherent in the other social-cultural contexts of nation-state, community, and organization. The creative work of people operating out of freedom of choice and collective effort enables people to concretely make their world different from what exists. As our conception of reality is a social and intellectual construct based on the context within which we create it, to grasp what is real for human potentialities from a global perspective is to conceptually go beyond what is actually present within nonglobal contexts. In a creative conception of reality, making use of conscious intentionality as to direction of effort, the future realization of human needs for all human kind can be opened up as a relevant current possibility for our lives.

Human beings who are not willing to transcend the alienating condition to a global perspective and requirements of world citizenship may feel incapable of doing anything about current social realities due to social-cultural contexts where people are exploited and oppressed. However, despite such feelings of alienation, as previously emphasized, within the condition of alienation exists the opportunity for people to separate themselves from a position of being a passive recipient of what exists and to actively conceive of reality from a global perspective. Conceiving of reality from a global perspective by responsible citizens of the world is a necessary step toward making that world responsible to common human needs.

As discussed next, present wants and future possibilities and desires become interconnected as what is creatively imagined as a hoped-for future way of life to meet common human needs becomes increasingly considered in the present.

Anticipation of the Future

The global perspective of world citizenship requires anticipation of the future as part of the planning process to meet common human needs. Anticipation of the future requires both the ability to accurately project current trends and the lessons of history, and the capacity to imagine and create totally new alternative possibilities for life in the world.[13] Anticipatory planning requires skills for critically assessing and projecting existing and historical experience and skills in building models and inventing designs for desirable alternatives. It also requires the motivation, will, and ability to actively plan for the future in a manner that transcends definition of problems and solutions that are no longer relevant for meeting the needs of all people on this planet. Such motivation, will, and ability can only arise out of meeting the previously mentioned requirements of a global perspective and world citizenship arrived at through a process of alienation from unworkable social-cultural contexts, and ways of defining problems and solutions that are dominant within these contexts. However, in addition to these factors, participation of people around the world in the identification and resolution of problems that interfere with meeting human needs is necessary in order to reach common understanding and agreements.

Participation

Participatory planning means joining together with other individuals and groups to work out a mutual course, and requires that everyone have the

opportunity to become involved in the recognition, definition, and resolution of issues and problems. In such planning, participation as a right cannot be required. As an opportunity participation must, however, be perceived to be available through the eyes of potential members in the planning process. In participatory planning, people come to realize that the absence of individuals and groups can be an essential part of an issue or problem. This realization can enlarge willingness of those involved in planning to enlarge participatory opportunities. Beyond the right of inclusion, participatory planning also requires that collective responsibility and accountability for outcomes must be incorporated in the process, so that all those involved have the necessary power, authority, and legitimation to see that planning is carried through to achievement of planning objectives and goals.[14]

Now to briefly summarize, participatory planning coupled with the other elements of the planning process mentioned previously means that participants in the planning process have a global perspective based on world citizenship. These participants operate from this perspective on the basis of conscious intentionality, freedom of choice, and collective effort. Further, the participants have incorporated within planning processes ways of anticipating the future.

A major obstacle to the implementation of the planning model outlined here has to do with the use of vested-interest planning. Vested-interest planning, as discussed next, minimizes participatory planning and the collective effort necessary for a global perspective and world citizenship.

VESTED-INTEREST PLANNING

Creative use has not been made of alienation in planning processes similar to that mentioned here as planning has largely proceeded on the basis of (1) interests other than a global perspective, (2) anticipation of

the future based on extrapolation from the past and present and projected to the future, assuming no significant change in the economic, political, cultural, and social institutions of the world, and (3) where participation in the planning process is restricted to those representing entities who want to achieve certain benefits to the disadvantage of others. Such a planning process is directed to the needs for self-preservation and realization of some, "the deserving," often with emphasis on the instrumental values of competition, "survival of the fittest," and inequality of access to equal circumstances of living. Within this kind of competitive vested-interest planning process, human resources for help in planning are perceived to be scarce rather than abundant. Planning efforts of an elite few are supported and rewarded, rather than the collective effort of many. Opportunities and perceived capacities for planning are restricted and based on inequality rather than expanded and based on equality. Planning objectives, goals, and methods are predetermined by the planning group prior to consideration by affected groups. Thus vested-interest planning is based on a win-lose formula, whereby participants in planning work to satisfy themselves and their restricted constituencies with a clear recognition that others will not also benefit.

Finally, vested-interest planning is directed in such a way that ensures against outcomes that might significantly alter the privileged position of planning participants and their constituencies. Definitions of problems and solutions worked out by planners are imposed upon others in such a manner that opportunities are limited for expression of different views, as well as action based upon these views.

Classic examples of vested-interest planning can be seen in the planning by multinational corporations such as General Motors and Du Pont, international

banks, oil companies, and by many nation-states in their relationship with other countries of the world. Such planning by organizations and nation-states based on self-interest to the exclusion of others cannot be used as a vehicle for the development of common values and goals among people throughout the world, whereby common needs are realized and common attempts are made to satisfy them.

Despite occasional rhetoric to the contrary, the clear purpose of planning by such groups is to oppose such a process of meeting common needs as it is not perceived to be in their best interest. Sophisticated planners within such groups are well aware of the implications of a planning process that operates on the basis of a global perspective of world citizenship, anticipation of the future, and participation of all concerned. This process for planning, if carried out, would significantly change the objectives, goals, and processes of vested-interest planning. Consequently attempts will continue to be made to discredit and stop such ventures as recommended here.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite attempts to discredit and limit planning based on a global perspective, anticipation of the future, and participatory involvement, such attempts cannot succeed in the long run.[15]

First, all people throughout the world have needs for self-preservation and realization of their human potentialities. Second, these needs when thwarted serve as a catalyst for action. Such action initially takes the form of activity to perceive and understand what is taking place. Third, perception and understanding of alienation from one's real needs, through attempts to substitute artificial needs, leads to growing apprehension about oppressive social-cultural conditions of alienation based on dominant nation-

state values and social arrangements that reinforce artificial needs. Fourth, perception and understanding of the nature of the alienating conditions normally creates sufficient stress to generate behavior to detach oneself from the social-cultural context contributing to alienation from basic needs. Fifth, the dual move of people toward recognition of real needs and away from the artificial need-creating situations serves to break the hold alienating conditions have on people. Finally, severing the means of alienation and alignment of people with their basic needs provides the opportunity for planning along the lines suggested here.

I am assuming that the dual move toward alignment with basic needs and away from the alienating social-cultural conditions will normally occur, and in fact has taken place on the part of many people in this world. Normally then, many people are or will be alienated from oppressive social-cultural circumstances antithetical to perception, understanding, and satisfaction of their basic needs for self-preservation and realization.

Clearly, however, creative use must be made of such alienation by people in a planning process along the lines noted here if anything other than continued alienation is to take place. Creative use of alienation that leads to necessary planning to meet needs is not assumed to be a normal and natural process. Instead it requires a conscious, rational, and calculated effort on the part of people (1) who are sufficiently disconnected from the hold oppressive social-cultural conditions have on them, and (2) who have some view of what is necessary to move beyond alienation to meet the basic human needs of all people in the world. Such a planning effort requires a global perspective on world citizenship, anticipation of the future, and participatory involvement. Establishing and implementing the planning process noted here does not have to wait till some future date. Many people

throughout the world are sufficiently alienated from oppressive conditions to begin the journey to create a better future for all of humankind and all of us are well along on the road. Alienation is a central feature of human existence on this planet. Creativity is one positive response to it; commitment to meeting the needs of all people is another. Life without estrangement from dominant nation-state interests interfering with world citizenship and the creation of common values and purposes to meet human needs for survival and realization is scarely worth living. What matters is to increase the capacity of people to cope with alienation in ways that benefit all people.

NOTES

1. See George and Achilles Theodorson. A Modern Dictionary of Sociology (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969) 9. Ernest Mandel and George Novak, The Marxist Theory of Alienation (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973). Joachim Israel, Alienation from Marx to Modern Sociology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971). Ada Finifter, ed., Alienation and the Social System (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972). Richard Schacht, Alienation (New York: Anchor, 1971). The inductory essay by Walter Kaufmann, "The Inevitability of Alienation," empasizes that estrangement from nature, society, one's fellow men, and oneself is part of growing up and becoming a self-conscious independent being.

2. See Agnes Heller, The Theory of Need in Marx (London: Allison and Busby, 1976). Andras Hegedus, et al., The Humanisation of Socialism (London: Allison and Busby, 1976), 58-76.

3. See James Herrick, Theory Building for Basic Institutional Change (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1977), 38-39. Erick Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1961), 21. Mark Satin, New Age Politics (Vancouver, B.C.: Whitecap Books, 1978), 83-89.

4. See Kenneth Schneider, Autokind vs. Mankind (New York: Schocken, 1972).

5. See Richard Quinney, Capitalist Society (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1979), 8-56. Andre Gorz, Socialism and Revolution (New York: Anchor, 1973). Carol Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism (London: Pluto Press, 1976). Joseph Gobel, False Consciousness - An Essay on Reification (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

6. See Erick Fromm, To Have or to Be? (New York: Harper and Row, 1976). Andre Gorz, Strategy for Labor (Boston: Beacon, 1968). Jaroslav Vanek, The Participatory Economy (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971). Ernst Schumacher, Small is Beautiful (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

7. See Robert Lifton, "The Struggle for Cultural Rebirth," Harpers (April 1973), 85. Paulo Friere, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). Friere, Education for Critical Consciousness (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).

8. See Agnes Heller, The Theory of Need in Marx, op. cit.

9. Such a step into the unknown is often stressful and frequently reported as a personal crisis. Personal crisis is viewed here as opening up the possibility for fundamental change. For details of this position see Herrick, Theory Building for Basic Institutional Change, op. cit., 28-36.

10. See James Botkins, et. al., No Limits to Learning (Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, 1979), 25-40. Jim Bowman, et. al., The Far Side of the Future (Houston: World Future Society, 1978).

11. Melvin Rader, "Community in Time of Stress." In University of Colorado Studies, Series in Philosophy, No. 2, August 1961, p. 91.

12. See Adolfo S. Vazquex, The Philosophy of Praxis (Atlantic Highlands, N.C.: Humanities Press, 1977). Gerson S. Sher, Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977). Alan Swingewood, Marx and Modern Social Theory (London: Macmillan, 1975). John Hoffman, Marxism and the Theory of Praxis (New York: International Publishers, 1975).

13. See Richard Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).

14. For examples of this kind planning see Max Jaggi, et al:, Red Bologna (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1957). David Barkin "Confronting the Separation of Town and Country in Cuba." In Tabb and Sawer, Marxism and the Metropolis "Communal Control of Social Services," in Thursz and Vigilante, ed., Meeting Human Needs, Vol. 2, (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1976), 129-151. Nada Smolic-Krkovic, "Self-Managing Communities," in Thursz and Vigilante, Ibid., 151-163.

15. See Robert Heilbroner, Business Civilization in Decline (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976). Heilbroner, An Inquiry into the Human Prospect (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974). Ernest Mandel, From Stalinism to Eurocommunism (New York: Schocken, 1978).